



PRESS RELEASE

16 March 2021

Sevenoaks pub reaches finals of Community Pub Hero Awards

Pub recognised for community support during lockdown

The Portobello Inn in West Kingsdown near Sevenoaks is one of just 10 pubs from across the country to reach the finals of the Community Pub Hero Awards, organised by PubAid and the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group and sponsored by Matthew Clark.

The competition was created to recognise the great work done by pubs since the first Covid lockdown in March last year, who have gone above and beyond to support their local communities, despite facing uncertainty themselves.

At the start of lockdown and the height of panic buying, the team at the Portobello Inn were concerned about the possible impact on local elderly and vulnerable, who might not have enough food to eat. Licensees Charmain and Steven Powell decided to make use of stock they had in the kitchen and put a message out to the community offering homemade lasagne, making 18 deliveries in the village.

Next week, the number increased to 70 meals and as word spread, they appealed for donations of money and food ingredients. Soon, they were delivering two hot meals a day, 2 or 3 times a week, to 100 people. Hearing about the great work the pub was doing, the COOK branch in Sevenoaks offered to help, and this partnership saw the number of meals increase to 170, and include a number of NHS workers.

Nationwide, 115 pubs entered the Community Pub Hero Awards, the majority nominated by their local MP. Entries were judged by a panel of industry experts and the overall Community Pub Hero will be announced later this spring.

PubAid co-founder Des O'Flanagan said: "Our heartfelt congratulations go to the Portobello Inn. Landlords and landladies and their teams have offered invaluable support for communities during the pandemic, whether offering vital supplies for residents, cooking hot

meals for the elderly or countering social isolation through online quizzes or chats. Choosing the 10 finalists was a real challenge for the judges, as every pub who entered had a strong story to tell. Those who have reached the shortlist should be very proud of their achievement.”

Richard Hayhoe, Marketing Director, Matthew Clark added: “We were delighted to support this competition and pleased with the response from pubs and the many MPs who nominated a ‘hero’ in their constituency. The fantastic work done by so many licensees and teams during the lockdowns and periods of restricted trading over the last year have provided a vital lifeline to countless people, and prove that pubs are genuinely a force for good in their communities.”

Mike Wood, MP for Dudley South and Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group said: “These awards have been a great opportunity for MPs to celebrate how landladies and landlords in their constituencies have stepped up to the mark to support their community during the pandemic. Yet again we have seen that pubs are the antidote to isolation.”

This is the third year for the competition, which was reshaped and renamed this year – it was formerly Charity Pub of the Year - to focus on community support rather than traditional charity fundraising.

THE FINALISTS

- The Angel & Crown, Richmond
- The Bevy, Brighton
- The Bowgie Inn, Crantock near Newquay, Cornwall
- The Clifton Arms, Blackburn
- The Horse & Jockey, Melling, Merseyside
- The Mowden, Darlington
- The Old Courts, Wigan
- The Orange Tree, Baldock, Hertfordshire
- The Portobello Inn, West Kingsdown, Kent
- The Portsmouth Arms, Hatch Warren, Basingstoke

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PubAid is a working party created in 2009 to promote UK pubs as a force for good in their communities, sharing the message that they raise over £100m per year for charities and contribute £40 million to grassroots sport. PubAid runs the World's Biggest Pub Quiz, which has raised £750,000 since its launch in 2016, and the Charity Pub of the Year Awards, which ran in 2018 and 2019 before being renamed as the Community Pub Hero Awards in 2020.

The PubAid steering group is led by co-founder Des O'Flanagan, and includes a number of well-known figures from the pub world, who lend their time and other resources to help spread the positive messages about pubs' role at the heart of their communities.

Matthew Clark is a leading national drinks wholesaler with over 200 years' experience supplying drink products, hospitality training, labour management and marketing support to over 16,000 On-Trade premises in the UK.

The All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group was set up in 1993 and has a membership of over 350 MPs and Peers. The Beer Group's objectives are to broaden recognition of the enormous contribution of brewing and pubs to the UK economy from grain to glass - and to celebrate the unique role that beer and pubs play in our society